

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A technique is provided for filtering noise in digital image data, particularly random point or spike noise. Image data may be rank order filtered and absolute differences between ordered values computed to create a mask. Blending is performed based upon a likelihood that individual pixels are or exhibit spike noise. The rank order filtered values may be used directly for blending, or the original image may be shrunk and then expanded to provide a rapid and computationally efficient spike noise reduction alternative.